

VZCZCXRO7697
PP RUEHDE
DE RUEHAD #2284 1561052
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 051052Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE ASHDC PRIORITY 5465
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATIONCOUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 002284

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, EB/TPP/TA
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR DONNELLY AND BELL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: UAE PRESS HIGHLIGHTS MBR'S REMARKS ON FTA

RE: A. ABU DHABI 2016
[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 1772

[1](#)1. U) Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR), UA Vice President/Prime Minister and Ruler of Duba gave a wide ranging interview to the pan-Arab pper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat on Saturday June 3, which as carried in most UAE Arabic and English languag papers the same day. MbR covered a number of tpics including: Iran's nuclear program, need foreducation reform, elections to the Federal Nationa Council, etc. The UAE Arabic and English language press, however, chose to highlight his remarkson the U.S.-UAE FTA, with headlines like "we will not pay a political price for a trade agreementwith the U.S.8

[1](#)2. (U) The interview had only on FTA question. Embassy informal translation folows:

Q: The United Arab Emirates is in negotiatins with the United States to establish a free trde agreement. Are there any political costs to tat agreement in light of the reaction to U.S. coditions on amending the labor law and allowing te formation of political gatherings? (Note: From ontext, we understand this to be trade unions. En Note)

A: The UAE will not pay political costs or any trade agreement with the U.S. or any othe (country).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: The fact that UAEpapers chose to highlight a minor portion of MbR' remarks reveals the high level of public interest/concern about the FTA, and the need for the government to "hang tough." We should also not read too much into MbR's remarks. It is clear that the FTA was not a major focus for the interview. In addition, the aggressive phrasing of the question required MbR to respond with a categorical answer. End Comment.
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